

TRAINING MANUAL FOR DRIVERS OF THE DISABLED IN **Alberta**

MODULE 4

Loading and Unloading

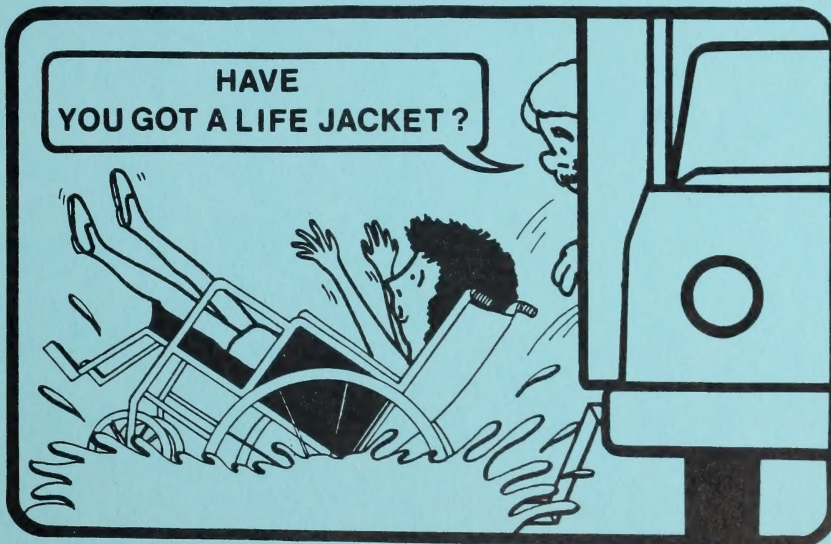


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MODULE 4

LOADING AND UNLOADING

INTRODUCTION

Unlike regular passengers, the disabled passenger requires special considerations before loading, unloading or moving the vehicle. Where the vehicle is located before a pick-up or drop-off, how passengers are moved into and out of the vehicle and how the person is secured in the vehicle all become important factors in passenger safety. While a non-disabled individual could make up for or overcome mistakes or poor planning on your part, the disabled are only presented with another obstacle. It is important to put yourself in the patron's position in order to gain a better understanding of the significance of the information provided.

This module is intended to provide the information needed during the pick-up and drop-off while the vehicle itself is stationary.

Such things as positioning of the vehicle, limb handling, assisting with coats, transfers, tie downs, use of ramp and lifts will be covered.

Positioning of the Vehicle

Before loading or unloading, some thought must be given to the location of the vehicle for this purpose. Proper location will make the process safer for the passengers, yourself and other road users. It will also make loading and unloading faster and easier.

Consider the following when positioning the vehicle:

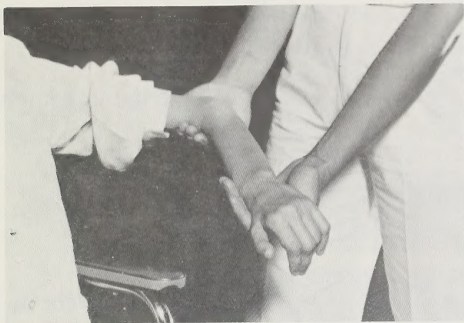
- Avoid congested areas where it is difficult to manoeuvre
- Try to have a drive through route; drive in - drive out without backing up
- Stop where other drivers have a good view of your location
- Avoid stopping where the passengers will have to be taken down curbs, rough areas, snow banks, water, etc.
- Signal your intentions to turn and stop well in advance
- Activate vehicle hazard warning lamps
- Place transmission in park or neutral (standard) and engage the parking brake
- If the vehicle is to be left unattended, turn ignition off and remove the keys
- Avoid getting too close to parked cars
- Leave room for the ramp/lift
- Leave room to manoeuvre the chair on or off the ramp/lift
- Stop as close as possible to pick-up/drop-off area, keeping the above in mind

Limb Handling

Proper limb handling skills are required for a number of reasons. First, many of the disabled will experience a great deal of pain and discomfort if their limbs are handled improperly. Second, it will make other tasks such as assisting with coats, transfers or general adjustments easier, more pleasant and more professional. Always remember to ask "May I help you?" "How may I help you?"

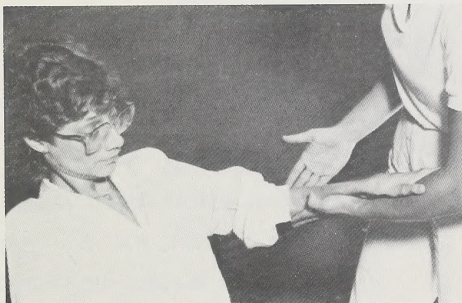
Whenever limbs must be handled, use the following technique:

Arms - Two Hands



- support the limb at, or near, a joint
- "cup" the limb from underneath - do not grab it using your fingers as this can tend to dig in and cause pain
- do not make sudden, jerky movements

Arms - One Hand



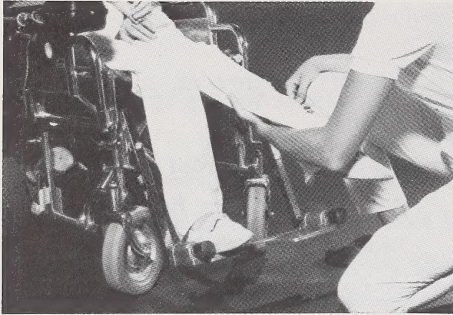
- Match right to right or left to left
- "cup" the person's upper forearm and support his/her wrist with your forearm
- do not make sudden, jerky movements

Legs - Two Hands



- Stay to one side of the limb to be moved
- "cup" the back of the knee with one hand
- "cup" the lower leg and ankle with the other hand
- do not make sudden, jerky movements

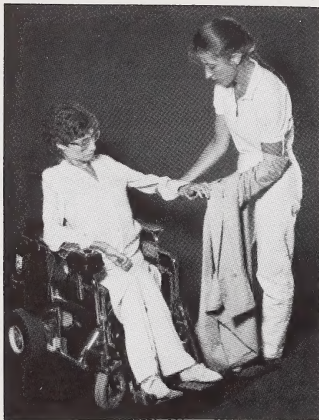
Legs - One Hand



- "Cup" under the knee with hand
- support the lower leg and ankle with your upper forearm
- do not make sudden, jerky movements

Coats

Some of your passengers may require help putting on coats in preparation for a trip outdoors. If you should find it necessary to assist, the following procedure is recommended:



- thread your left arm through the left sleeve of the person's coat or jacket
- using one-handed limb handling, pull sleeve up to shoulder



- lean person forward, support the person at the front, pull the coat around the person's back
- pull excess material to opposite arm



- leave off the shoulders and repeat the first two steps



- pull coat up over shoulders
- *adjust as necessary

*It is important to the individual involved not to leave the clothing looking wrinkled and sloppy. A few seconds spent adjusting the jacket will go a long way to increase the person's self-esteem.

Assisting the Ambulatory

Not all of your passengers will be confined to a wheel chair. Some will be able to walk by themselves, others may get around using a cane or walker. If you have a passenger who seems to have difficulty walking and is unfamiliar to you, ask what assistance is required before you proceed to help. Touching a person can cause balance problems and could lead to a fall. If the person refuses assistance, stay close and be prepared to help just in case.

Should the person need some help, the following procedure is recommended:



- grasp the person's forearm using your same hand (i.e., left to left or right to right)
- use your other hand to grasp person's upper arm
- use proper limb handling techniques



- if the person is very unsteady or starts to fall, maintain your grasp of the forearm
- use your other hand to put around his/her waist (grasp clothing or belt if necessary)

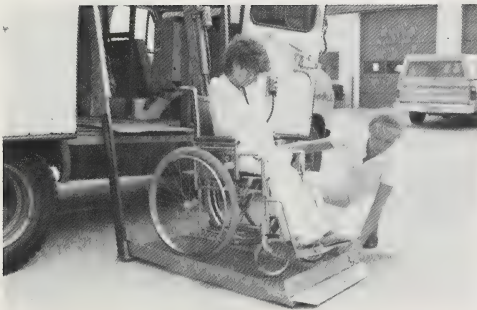
NOTE: If a fall is imminent, you are best to make every effort to cushion the passenger from it's effects but attempts to prevent the fall could lead to injuries for both the passenger and yourself.

Lifts

Safe loading and unloading involves knowing how to properly operate the vehicle's entry system. Generally, vehicles equipped with lifts have one of two types. These are side loading lifts or rear loading. The procedure to be followed is similar, but the difference lies in the way the passenger faces. Using a rear loading lift system generally requires that the passenger face the vehicle, while side loading lifts require the passenger to face away from the vehicle. In either case, the following procedure is recommended:



- be sure the doors are locked open and cannot accidentally swing closed
- lower lift to ground level, being careful not to "drive" it into the ground or leave it resting on uneven ground that makes entry difficult
- place chair on the lift, being careful to ensure that feet, legs, footrests, chair parts, etc., will not get jammed between the vehicle and the lift as it goes up



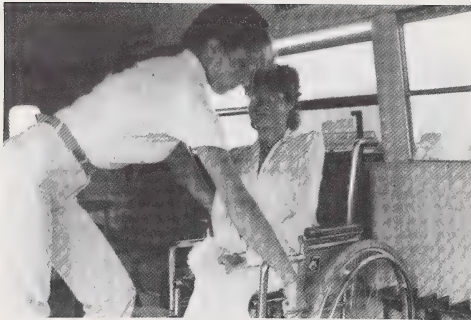
- put on chair brakes
- put up safety plate



- hold chair with your arm across the rider so that in the event of problems you can add some stability



- release the brakes
- roll into vehicle and apply brakes



- enter the vehicle and manoeuvre the chair to the desired location
- use tie downs, seat belts and wheel chair brakes



- *return the lift to the upright position
- ensure the doors are closed before re-entering the vehicle

*During times of cold or inclement weather, do not leave the doors open longer than necessary. Close the doors before securing the chair to the vehicle.

*When a rear loading vehicle is being used, the ignition should be turned off to prevent carbon monoxide fumes from entering the vehicle.

NOTE:

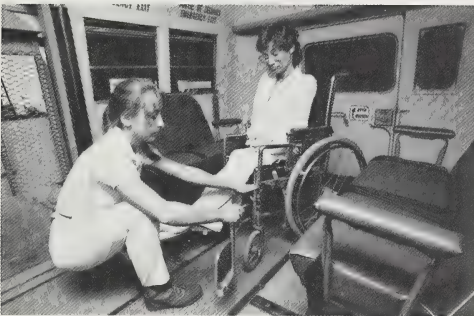
To unload, reverse the above procedure.

Ramps

Some vehicles are not equipped with power lifts but have a manual lift system installed. In this event, ensure the ramp is stabilized and the entry/exit point is as safe as possible. Use proper ramp techniques (Module 3). Be especially careful not to strike your head when entering or leaving the vehicle. Many vehicles are equipped with rear loading ramps, ensure that the ignition is turned off to prevent carbon monoxide from entering the vehicle.

Transfers Within A Vehicle

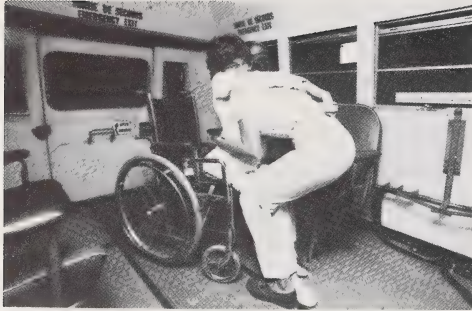
Depending upon the type and capacity of vehicle you drive, it may be necessary to transfer a passenger from chair to seat. This may be required either to make room or because the chair cannot be tied down and it is therefore unsafe to transport the occupant in it. If transfers are required, the following procedure is recommended:



- manoeuvre the chair to the location
- apply the brakes
- remove the footrests (use proper limb handling techniques)
- remove the armrest on the side closest to the transfer area



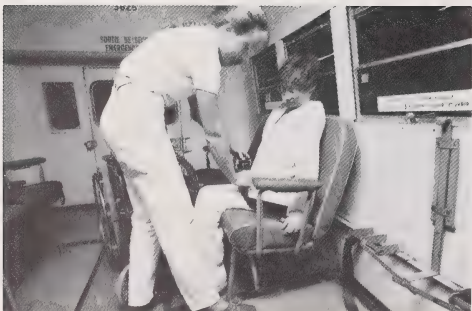
- place the chair at a 45° angle to the new seating area
- apply the brakes
- put your arm behind the person's knees and slide him/her forward



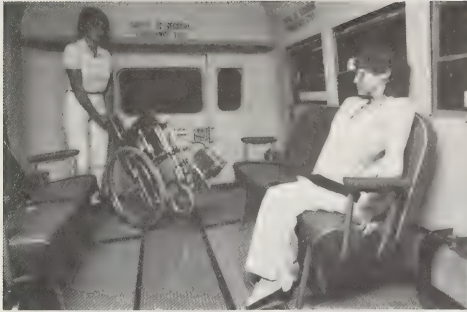
- put your legs outside the passenger's and turn your inside foot in the direction of the intended move
- grip the person's knees between your own
- lean the person forward, place his/her arms over your shoulders
- grasp your hands together behind his/her back (or grab a belt)



- using proper body mechanics, lift, turn, lower
- advise the person of the timing so he/she can assist when possible



- adjust the person in the seat
- put on seat belt



- if the transfer is made inside a large vehicle, fold the chair and store it in a safe place where it cannot roll around or cause injury. Tie it down if possible.

Transfers Into An Automobile



- Position the chair at an angle to the door
- Remove both footrests and armrests closest to the vehicle
- Slide person forward



- Place person's arms around your neck and obtain a secure hold around their waist
- Grasp their knees between your thighs
- Point your foot closest the vehicle in the direction of the transfer
- Count "1, 2, 3"



- Using proper body mechanics, lift, turn, lower
- Do not release until the person is safely on the seat



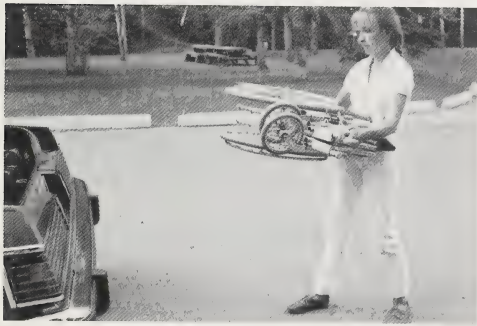
- Lift legs over door jamb using proper limb handling techniques
- Ensure the person is comfortable
- Adjust clothing if necessary
- Fasten their seat belt

Automobile Trunks

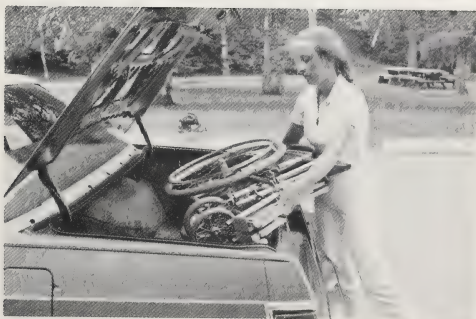
If you are a taxi driver or provide individual transportation for the disabled, you will be required to transfer the passenger and store the chair in the trunk of your car. In that case, the following procedure is recommended:



- be sure the chair is properly folded
- assume a safe base
- bend over the chair and grab the frame (do not grab the wheel)



- straighten up, keeping the chair close to the body
- wheels should be parallel to the ground



- maintain a safe base
- lower the chair gently into the trunk
- *forcing the chair may cause damage

Review Questions

Module 4

1. List the important considerations for positioning the vehicle to load or unload passengers.

2. Describe the one handed limb handling technique for arms and legs.

3. Describe the technique that should be used when assisting the ambulatory disabled.

4. What three devices are available to ensure that wheel chair and occupant remain secure during transit?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

5. Under what conditions may it be necessary to transfer a passenger from a wheel chair to a seat?

6. Describe the technique you should follow in placing a wheel chair into the trunk of an automobile.

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This material was prepared by Alberta Transportation for use by drivers who are involved in the transportation of the disabled.

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